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FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON
AND
FRIDOLINE
— ♦ —
MORITZ RETZSCH.





251-

1905

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THE
FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON

A ROMANCE

BY F. SCHILLER

TRANSLATED BY J. P. COLLIER, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE POETICAL DECAMERONE"

ILLUSTRATED WITH SIXTEEN ENGRAVINGS IN OUTLINE

BY HENRY MOSES

FROM THE DESIGNS OF RETZSCH

London:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, LOW AND SEARLE

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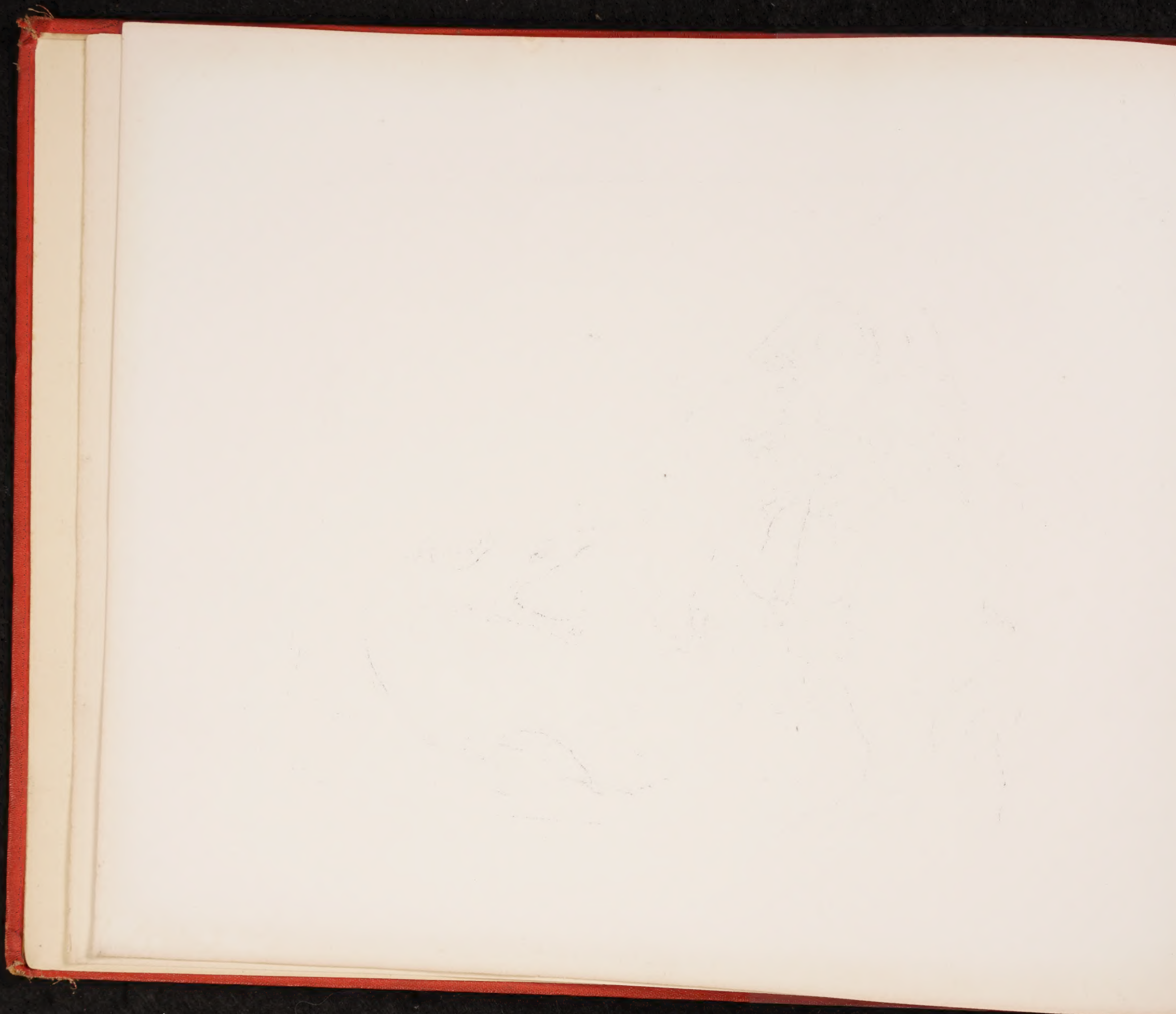
1897

1897



Designed by Retach.

Engraved by Henry Moore.





Designed by Retsch.

Engraved by Henry Moses.



THE
FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON:
A ROMANCE.

BY F. SCHILLER.

I.

WHERE run the people in amaze,
In tides that choke the lengthen'd ways?
Is Rhodes in flames? Each lesser current
Uniting forms a stormy torrent.—
A warrior mounted on his horse
Is borne as by the torrent's force:
Behind him, deed of high adventure!
A monster in the tumult's centre.

It seems a Dragon, with the jaws
Of crocodile stretch'd wide asunder.

All greet the Knight with wild applause,
And on the Dragon gaze with wonder.



THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

II.

A thousand voices from the crowd,
"That is the Dragon," shout aloud,
"Which slaughter'd herdsmen, flocks, and cattle,
Until this hero won the battle !
Many who dar'd the fight before,
But dar'd to return no more :
To him give honours, then, and praises ! "
While thus the crowd upon him gazes,
Toward the cloister he went on,
And there arriving unexpected,
The holy Knights of good St. John
With speed in council were collected.

III.

Before the Master's seat he came
With modest step, almost of shame :
The people rush in eager clusters,
And crowd the galleries and balusters.
Thus did the youth the Council greet :—
"My knightly duty is complete :
The Dragon that our island wasted,
Of death by this my hand has tasted :







THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

The shepherd now may feed his flock,
The wanderer safe his way unravel,
And the lone pilgrim, o'er the rock
To mercy's shrine securely travel."—

IV.

A look severe the Master gave,
And said :—"Thou art a hero brave :
The grace of knighthood is endurance,
And thine is prov'd by this assurance !
But the first duty of a Knight
Now tell, who vows for Christ to fight,
And on whose shield the red-cross glistens ?"
Each forward bends, and pallid listens
What answer might the youth return.
He bow'd, and blush'd with manly beauty :—
"He, worthy of the Cross, should learn
Obedience as his earliest duty."

V.

The Master said :—"My son, I wot
This duty was by thee forgot,
Since to that fight, by law forbidden,
With impious courage thou hast ridden."—





THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

“ Oh, Father ! when the whole thou’rt told,”
The Knight replied, though calm yet bold,
“ Thoul’t find, if thou but justly weigh it,
I but intended to obey it.

I did not dare the conflict high
With rashness, to the law a stranger ;
But with design, deliberately,
I sought the Dragon, dar’d the danger.

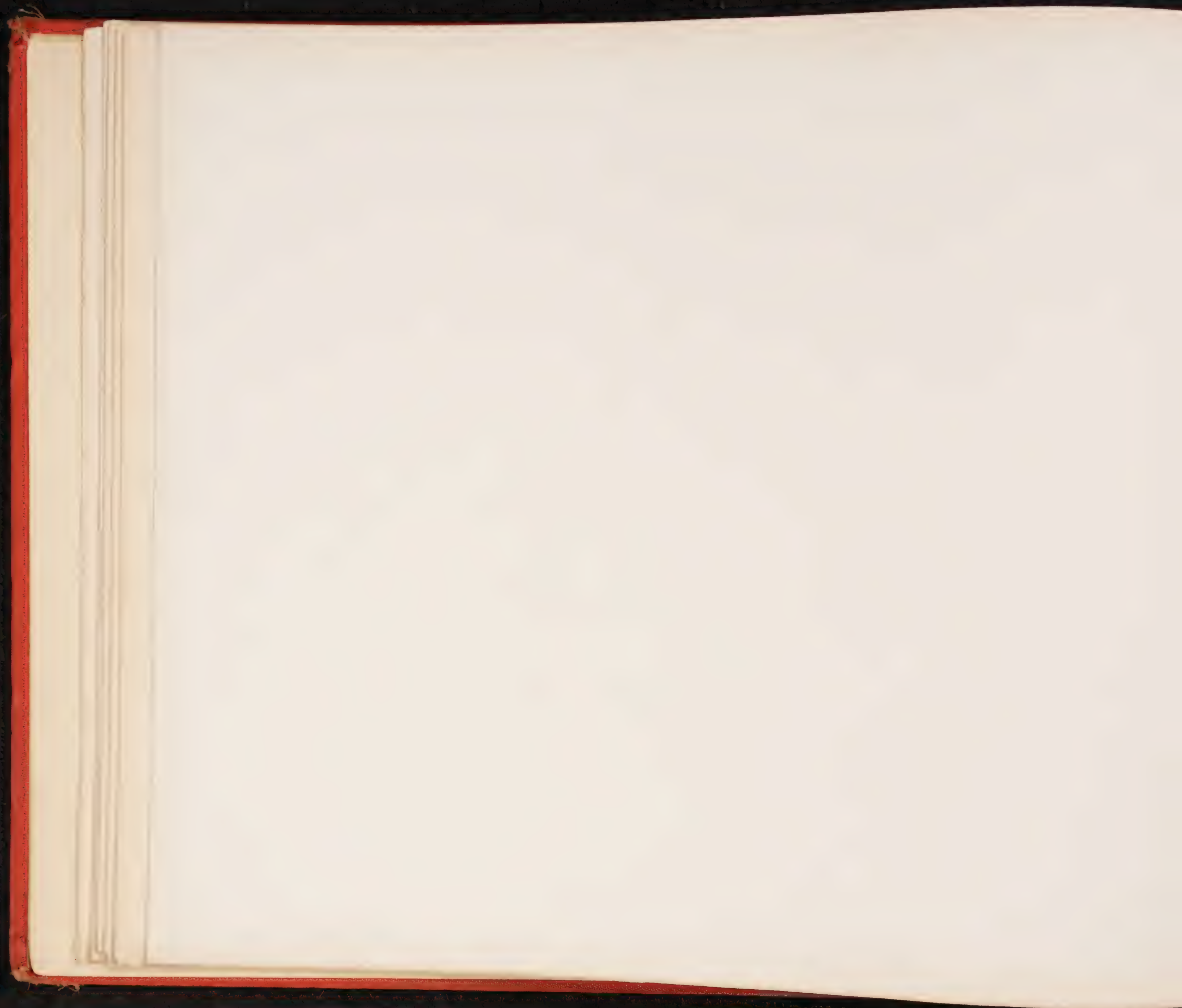
VI.

“ Five of our valiant Knights had died,
Religion’s sacrifice and pride,
Fighting the Dragon on our border,
Before that law restrain’d our Order.
My heart was gnaw’d by fell despite ;
I yearn’d by day, I dreamt by night :
My dreams my earnest wishes granting,
Me seem’d as in the struggle panting.

My torment grew as grew the morn,
The beams of daylight but renew it,
Till I resolv’d, in peril’s scorn,
To seek the monster—to subdue it.







THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

VII.

“ And to myself I said, in sooth,
What honours manhood, graces youth ?
What gave the noblest heroes glory,
Whose deeds still live in song and story ?
What raised to mighty gods, and high,
The worthies of blind Pagany ?
From monsters slain their glory rises—
They freed the world in dread emprises
 All undismay’d in fight they stood,
Of Minotaurs made vengeful slaughters ;
 Nor shrunk to shed their noblest blood
To save earth’s fairest sons and daughters.

VIII.

“ Should Saracens be deem’d alone
Well worth the sword that Christians own ?
’Gainst false gods only have we striven ?
To Christians rule and might are given,
That they by valiant arm and strong,
May aid all need, redress all wrong :
By wisdom should their strength be guided,
And force by art be still derided.



THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON

Thus oft I said, and went alone
To mark the monster—to bereave it
Of life : the way at length seem'd shown :
'Thus (I exclaimed) may I achieve it !'

IX.

"I came, and thus I said to thee :—
'My native land I fain would see.'—
By thee my earnest prayers were granted :
I pass'd the ocean, and I planted
My foot upon my native soil :
Then bade I a rare artist's toil
Construct the well-mark'd form and features
Of one of these most fearful creatures.

The legs were short, the weight that bore
Of its huge body ; close connected,
Were shining scales behind, before,
Which all its lengthen'd back protected.

X.

"Its throat was stretch'd out long and fell,
And horrid as the gate of Hell ;
And when it seized on prey and plunder,
Its greedy jaws gaped wide asunder.







THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON

In a deep gulf of gloom and blood,
In rows its teeth all jagged stood ;
A sword-like tongue ; and through the lashes
Of its small eye-lids darted flashes.

Its monstrous back was wide and long,
And in a serpent's tail it ended,
To wind in pliant circles strong
Round steed and warrior undefended.

XI.

" When the feign'd monster was complete,
In horror clad from head to feet,
Half serpent and half dragon render'd,
As in some poisonous marsh engender'd,
Two mastiffs took I, fierce of breed,
Huge, strong, and with the swiftest speed
Accustom'd to pursue the traces
Of Uri wild through desert places.

With voice and action urged I these
To fury, that they might expend it
Upon the image first, then seize
Upon the living foe and rend it.







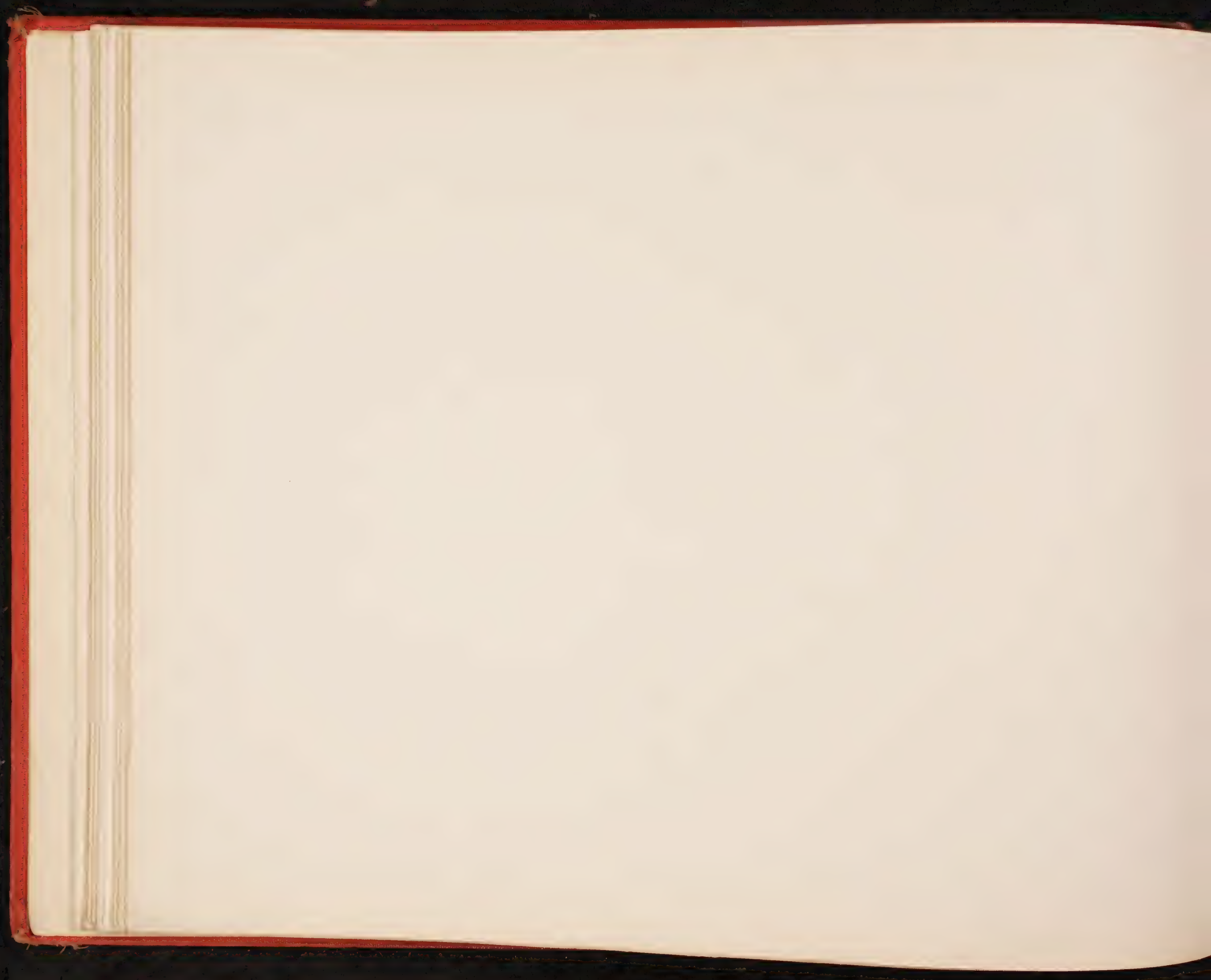
THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

XII.

“ And where the paunch was bare and white,
And least defended from their bite,
I bade my dogs direct their fury,
Their teeth, as in the flesh, to bury ;
While arm’d, as for the fight indeed
I mounted my Arabian steed.
Its veins the noblest blood inherit ;
And rousing all its fiery spirit,
 Into its side my spurs I press’d ;
Rush’d at the image to subdue it ;
 Against it set my spear in rest,
As if intending to pierce through it.

XIII.

“ At first my snorting charger rear’d,
And started when the foe he near’d ;
My savage dogs, too, shrunk in terror :
But soon I train’d them from their error.
This course I constantly pursued,
’Till three times was the moon renew’d.
When fit for my emprise I made them,
On ship-board I with speed convey’d them.







THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

'Tis the third morn since I arrived,
And for my high adventure landed :
My strength by rest I scarce revived,
But sought the mighty task commanded.

XIV.

“The recent sufferings of the land
Inflam'd my heart and nerved my hand.
The herds and herdsmen had been slaughter'd,
As near the marsh they stray'd and watered.
I soon resolved upon my part,
And, taking council of my heart,
Upon my charger I conducted
My pages for the deed instructed,
And my fierce dogs, so often tried,
For such unwonted conflict peerless,
Through paths where we were unespied
To seek the hideous monster fearless.

XV.

“Thou know'st the Chapel, Sire, I ween,
That on the lofty rock is seen,
And overlooks the island's border.
Built by the Master of our Order.



THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

It seems a humble pile of stones,
But still a miracle it owns—
The infant Saviour and his Mother,
With three kings kneeling near each other.
On three times thirty steps 'tis reared ;
The dizzy pilgrim, on arrival,
Discovers, as his Lord he neared,
His weary senses feel revival.

XVI.

“ Beneath a huge o’erhanging block,
Is a deep cavern in the rock,
Dank with the stagnant marsh’s vapour,
And lit by neither beam nor taper :
There dwelt the dragon, night and day,
Incessant looking out for prey ;
And, like Hell’s serpent proud rebelling,
He watch’d at foot of Jesus’ dwelling :
And should some Pilgrim out of breath,
But turn into this path forbidden,
The monster dragg’d him to his death,
By rushing from his covert hidden.















THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

XVII.

“I mounted to this Chapel high,
And, ere I sought my enemy,
Kneeling before the infant Saviour,
By shrift besought Heaven’s grace and favour :
Then, in the Sanctuary’s light,
I don’d my armour glittering bright,
And swift descended to the battle,
With spear in hand, ’mid trappings’ rattle.
My pages’ aid I did not need,
But with my dogs alone descended ;
And, ere I sprang upon my steed,
My soul to highest God commended !

XVIII.

“I soon was on an open plain ;
And while my mastiffs scoured amain,
My panting horse sprang back—’twere idle
To urge him then with spur or bridle.
Not far I saw my foe uproll’d
In many a horrid glittering fold,
Where in the sunshine he had wound him ;
My dogs uprous’d him, and went round him ;











THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

But with the arrow's speed they flew,
To see his yawning jaws disparted,
While poisonous breath around he threw,
When howling from his rest he started.

XIX.

"I soon revived their wonted rage,
The foe in conflict to engage;
While 'gainst the flank, too well protected,
My spear I with firm hand directed.
But nought the useless stroke avails,
Swift glancing from the shining scales;
And, ere my blow could be repeated,
My swerving steed my aim defeated.

He caught the Dragon's deadly glance:
And by its poisonous breath was driven;

He rear'd—nor would one step advance.—
Now fear'd I, I had vainly striven!

XX.

"Then swiftly leapt I from my horse,
And with my sword with all my force,
By blows redoubled made endeavour
Its rocky harness to dissever:



THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

But with its huge tail, swinging round,
It struck me powerless to the ground ;
Then, with its horrid jaws extended,
It rush'd at me all undefended :

But ere its fearful teeth could bite,
My mastiffs fix on it, and bury
Their fangs within its stomach white,
And the foe yell'd with pain and fury ;

XXI.

" And ere my dogs their hold let go,
I started from the earth below,
And where the paunch was white and naked,
My weapon's thirst I eager slaked :
Up to the hilt I plunged my sword,
And life-blood in black torrents pour'd.
Down fell the monster, and, in falling,
O'erwhelm'd me with its weight appalling.

All sense was in a moment fled ;
I found me, soon as I recover'd,
Close by the bleeding Dragon dead,
While o'er me my attendants hovered."--











THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

XXII.

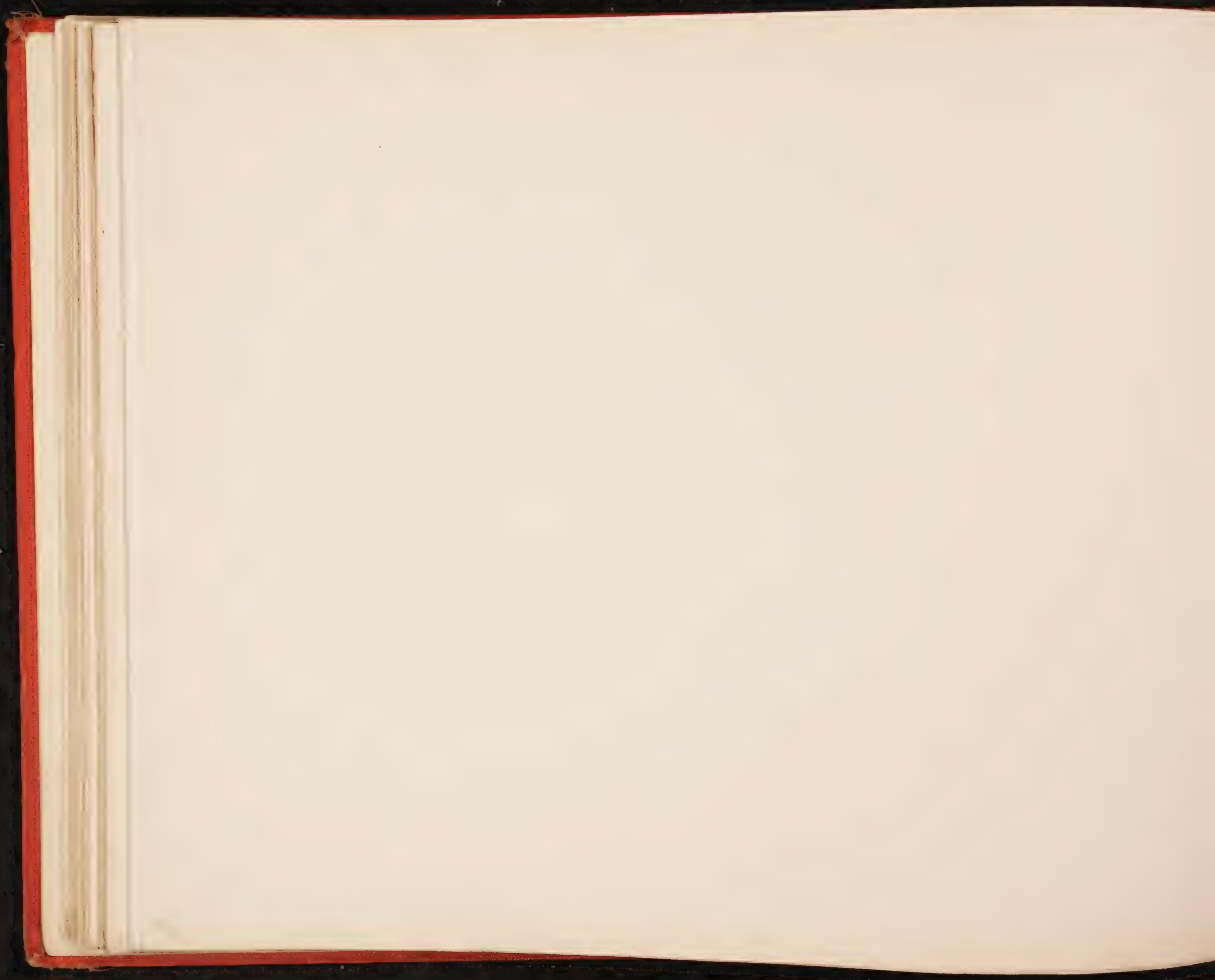
Th' applause that long had been subdued,
Now burst from all the multitude,
Soon as the Warrior's tale was ended.
In broken echoes it ascended ;
And as the mingled voices roll'd,
'Twas multiplied a thousandfold :
The hero's crown, by claim undoubted,
Was his ! his Order's brethren shouted.

The crowd had him in triumph shown,
Grateful for victory prized so dearly,

But that the Master, he alone,
Bespake the youth, and frown'd severely.

XXIII.

“The Dragon that laid waste the land
Is slain by thy victorious hand :
To be the people's god thou burnest ;
But thus thine Order's foe returnest.
Thy heart has bred a foe more fell
Than this which thou hast dared to quell—
A pois'nous serpent whose seduction
Leads to dissension and destruction :—



THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

A spirit insolent, that joys
To fill the gaping crowd with wonder,
But which the world itself destroys,
And rends the bonds of peace asunder !

XXIV.

“The Saracen boasts courage tried,
Obedience is the Christian’s pride ;
And where our Saviour, great and holy,
Roam’d like a pilgrim, poor and lowly,
The Father of our Order taught
The followers, who his conquests wrought,
The duty first to be completed,
Was, that self-will should be defeated.

Vain-glory thou hast sought to share :
Away, then, from my sight ! I warn them,
Who the Lord’s yoke refuse to bear,
With the Lord’s cross shall ne’er adorn them !”

XXV.

The people’s tumult, uncontroll’d,
Like storm through all the structure roll’d.
For mercy pray’d the holy brethern :
The youth look’d down, and silent gathering







THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON.

His robe, laid it aside ; then bent
To kiss the Master's hand—and went.
The Master, who had thus subdued him,
Recall'd him, as his eye pursued him :
 And cried :—" Embrace me, worthy son !
Thou now hast gain'd a fight more glorious !
 The cross by humbleness is won :—
'Tis thine, since o'er thyself victorious !"

THE END.



FRIDOLIN

OR

THE ROAD TO THE IRON FOUNDRY

A BALLAD

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FRIDOLIN;
OR,
THE ROAD TO THE IRON-FOUNDRY.
A BALLAD.

BY F. SCHILLER.

I.

A PIOUS youth was Fridolin,
And strove, through God, to learn
The way his Mistress' love to win,
The Lady of Savèrn.
She was so gentle, and so good,
Had she e'er shown a wayward mood,
To please her he no less had striven
With joy, and for the sake of Heaven.

II.

From the first gleam of morn until
With vespers day withdrew,
He only liv'd to do her will,
Enough he could not do.
"Be not so anxious," should she cry,
The tear would start into his eye :
He thought him wanting in his duty
Did he not toil to tend her beauty.







FRIDOLIN : A BALLAD.

III.

Therefore above the household all
Him did his lady raise,
And from her lovely lips would fall
His unexhausted praise.
As her own child, and not as Page,
Did he his lady's heart engage,
While her bright eyes with purest pleasure
Upon his features dwelt at leisure.

IV.

But in the huntsman Robert's breast
The poison rankled fell
Of deadly hate of what was best,
And made his black soul swell.
He rashly play'd the traitor's part,
And strew'd upon his Master's heart
Suspicion's seeds, with envy burning,
As from the chase they were returning.

V.

Thus wily spake he :—"In good sooth,
My Lord, I hold thee blest :
Thou never feel'st doubt's poison'd tooth
Disturb thy golden rest :
Thou hast a Lady chaste as high,
Whose life is girt by purity ;
Seducers' efforts ne'er were vainer
Than if they idly strove to gain her."

VI.

His Master roll'd his darkling eyes :—
"Thy speech, my friend, is strange !
Who upon woman's vows relies
When like the waves they change ?
Still flattery has a winning sound !
My faith is built on firmer ground :
My wife, I trust, needs no resistance,
From all such dangers kept at distance !"







FRIDOLIN : A BALLAD.

VII.

Robert return'd :—" It merits scorn ;
Thou'rt right I must aver :
Yet still a menial, lowly born,
Dares even think of her.
Ay, to thy wife, whom he obeys,
His base desires presumes to raise."
" What ! " cried Savèrn, with passion trembling,
" And lives he there ?—Nay, no dissembling ! "

VIII.

" Yes ; and 'tis what all tongues confess :
Dost thou not know it true ?
But if his guilt thou wilt suppress,
I will conceal it too."—
" Quick, answer me, or thou shalt die !
Who dares to lift his heart so high ?"
His Lord in fearful fury utter'd ;
" The fair-hair'd Page ; " the huntsman mutter'd.

IX.

" He's not ill-favour'd to behold ! "
He thus pursued with art :
At every word, now hot, now cold
Became his master's heart.
" Is't possible thou couldst not see
He gazed on her so doatingly ?
At meals thy orders little bootied,
To her chair only was he rooted.

X.

" Mark here the lines he dar'd to write,
And thus his flame confess'd :"—
" Confess'd !"—" And sought her to requite
The passion of his breast.
Thy Lady, e'en to thee alone,
In pity would not make it known :
I now repent I could reveal it ;
But why shouldst thou so deeply feel it ? "







FRIDOLIN : A BALLAD.

XI.

Savèrn into the forest rode,
His fury brook'd no more :
There in a lofty furnace glowed
The molten iron ore.
The vassals with a busy hand
To feed the fire around it stand :
Huge bellows blowing, sparks outflaring,
As they the rocks were vitrifying.

XII.

The fire's rage, the water's force,
Were here united found :
The river in its rushing course
The wheels whirl'd round and round.
The engines rattled day and night,
The hammers beat with measured might ;
The stunning strokes repeated often
Compell'd the iron itself to soften.

XIII.

He beckon'd two : when they came near
He thus imposed their task :—
“The first that shall approach ye here,
And who shall also ask,
'Your Lord's hest have ye follow'd well ?'
Thrust him within that burning hell,
The fire, to ash to burn him, double,
That he my sight no more may trouble !”

XIV.

With savage joy the eye-balls glar'd
Of this inhuman pair ;
Each heart within their breasts as hard
As if it iron were.
They plied the labouring bellows fast,
The flames loud roar'd at every blast :
Thirsting for blood, as yet untasted,
For death's fell sacrifice they hasted.







FRIDOLIN : A BALLAD.

XV.

False Robert to the Page then said
With dark hypocrisy—
“ Make speed, make speed, be not delay’d,
My Lord hath need of thee.”—
To Fridolin his master spake :—
“ Thy way toward the Foundry take,
And ask of yonder furnace-warders
If they have yet fulfill’d my orders !”

XVI.

The Page said :—“ I obey thy will,”
And was prepared with speed ;
But thought while he was pausing still
“ Will nought my Lady need ?”
To her he went without delay :—
“ Can I do aught upon the way ?
My Lord to yonder wood has sent me,
But first thy service should content me.”

XVII.

The Lady said in gentle voice :—
“ My son lies ill, alas !
Or in the church I should rejoice
To hear the holy Mass.
But go, my Page, to Mass, and there
Devoutly offer up thy prayer ;
Repent thy sins, and when thou ’rt shriven,
Let me too share the mercy given.”

XVIII.

With joy the task he undertook
And started on his road ;
And ere the village he forsook
That led to God’s abode,
He heard the welcome peal of bells
High sounding over hills and dells,
Which every soul in sin benighted
To solemn Sacrament invited.







FRIDOLIN : A BALLAD.

XIX.

“ If God upon the way you meet,
Shun not so high a grace ! ”
He said, and sought with reverend feet
God’s holy dwelling-place.
All there was still : the sun shone high
On the hot reaper’s industry ;
No choristers were met together
For service in the harvest weather.

XX.

He soon resolv’d, not unprepar’d,
And Sacristan became :
“ He who advances heavenward
Is not (thought he) to blame.”
The stole and cincture for the waist
Upon the pious Priest he plac’d ;
And in due order he proceeded
To bring the holy vessels needed.

XXI.

And when thus far his task was o’er,
The mass-book in his hand,
To th’ altar walk’d he on before
And took below his stand.
He knelt him left, he knelt him right,
On every sign he kept his sight,
And with the *Sanctus* slow propounded,
At the dread name his bell thrice sounded.

XXII.

And when the holy Priest had bow’d
With all solemnity,
And show’d the Host, the present God,
In hand uplifted high,
The Page, who knew his duty well,
Rang shrill and clear his little bell :
All beat their breasts, and kneeling lowly,
Cross’d them before the Saviour holy.



FRIDOLIN : A BALLAD.

XXIII.

All was perform'd with punctual rite,
And in no part he err'd ;
Whate'er is done before God's sight,
He knew it word for word.
He nought omitted serving thus
To the *Vobiscum Dominus*,
When blessing all the Priest descended,
And thus the holy service ended.

XXIV.

Last put he all things careful by
In orderly array ;
And, having cleans'd the Sanctuary,
He went upon his way.
With conscience clear and satisfied,
To the dark forest near he hied :
Twelve paternosters he repeated,
And silently the whole completed.

XXV.

And when he saw the furnace smoke,
The warders grim at hand,
" Have ye (his master's words he spoke)
Fulfill'd your Lord's command ?"—
With hideous and exulting grin
They cried, " He's safe enough within !"
And pointing 'mid the fiercest blazes,
" Our Lord will give his servants praises."

XXVI.

Back to Savèrn this answer brought
The Page with speedy flight :
When his Lord saw him, as he thought,
He scarce could trust his sight.
" Unhappy wretch ! whence com'st thou—tell ?"
" From yonder wood."—" Impossible !
What then upon the way delay'd thee ?"—
" Only my prayers :—I then obey'd thee."







FRIDOLIN · A BALLAD.

XXVII.

“When from thy sight I went this day,
 Forgive me that I err,
I ask’d the Lady I obey
 Could I do aught for hear?
She order’d me the mass to hear;
And glad I was, my Lord, for there
I spoke four rosaries, each disaster
To ward from her and thee, my Master.”

XXVIII.

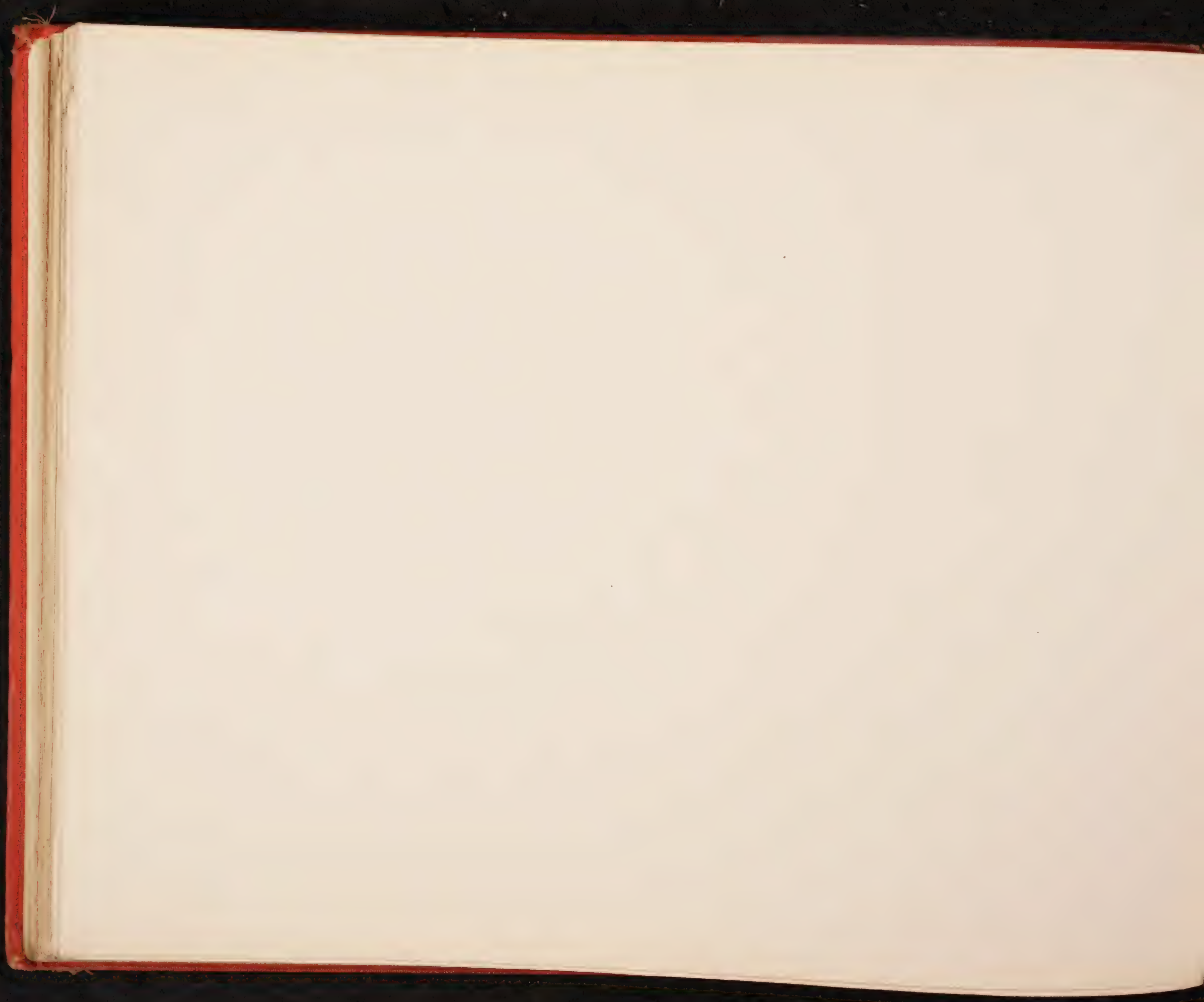
Savèrn in deep astonishment
 Could scarce the rest inquire:—
“Tell me (he cried) the message sent
 Back from that place of fire?”
“The meaning’s dark (said Fridolin);
They told me ‘He is safe within!’
And laughing pointed ’mid the blazes,
‘Our Lord will give his servants praises.’”

XXIX.

“And, Robert?” ask’d his Lord again,
 While cold ran back his blood:
“Did you not meet him on the plain?
 I sent him to the wood.”
“I met him not; in wood or lea
No trace of Robert could I see.”
“’Tis judged by God himself!” in wonder
Exclaim’d Savèrn as struck by thunder.

XXX.

Then as he was not wont whilere,
 His Servant’s hand he took,
And led him to his Lady near;
 Unconscious was her look:
“This boy is more than Angel pure;
To him let me thy grace ensure:
To harm him were a vain endeavour:
God and his host protect him ever!”





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